

Patrick Eisenhart  
Lewiston

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,

Passage of LD 1417 is long overdue to protect Maine voters from organized, extremely well-funded national effort by big out of state corporations to transfer Maine and the nation from a Democracy controlled middle class voters to an oligarchy controlled by a handful of very wealthy people.

Few fit that description better than Republican, right-wing, libertarian Charles Koch and corporate/legislator network which has already established a foothold in our state.

In Maine, the Koch network funds the Maine Heritage Institute through its Cato institute. It funds the Maine chapter of American Executive Legislative Council (ALEC) made up of state lawmakers, and it also funds Republican candidates for office such as the \$10000 donation to Maine's 2nd Congressional Republican candidate Dale Crafts.

Charles Koch and his late brother have been quite successful for decades in using their massive wealth to get gains in their quest to obtain massive tax cuts for the wealthy, escape or eliminate fossil fuel pollution laws, to deny climate change, to privatize education, prisons and other governmental institutions. They have worked hard to create distrust in our system of voting and equal opportunities, to sway public opinion with false advertising, and the list of horrors goes on in the name of money and profits.

Koch Industries is the second largest privately held company in America, worth upwards of \$80 billion. It is one of the country's top 15 polluters, responsible for more than 300 oil spills. It has paid over \$100 million in fines and been found guilty by a federal jury of stealing oil from Native American lands.

The Kochs have invested multi-millions in more than 85 right-wing organizations over the years to push an anti-government, libertarian agenda. Many local Tea Party chapters were fronts for Americans for Prosperity, one of their groups. Another big recipient, ALEC, or the American Legislative Exchange Council, drafts bills and talking points that Republican officials cite again and again. In the 2012 presidential election cycle, the Koch's right-wing donor network spent \$400 million on electioneering.

They spent millions lobbying to get the last three Supreme Court judges appointed and have contributed to virtually every Republican Senator's campaign and funded the Freedom Caucus in the house of Representative.

The Koch's Americans for Prosperity organization led a successful takeover of the school board in Wake County, North Carolina in 2009, which then ended student busing to resegregate high schools. They resurrected the coded rhetoric of the old South, using terms like "forced busing" and "neighborhood schools."

As donors to higher education, the Kochs have designed grant agreements with more than 150 colleges and universities where they restrict academic freedom by exerting control over who gets hired.

Through national legal advocacy groups like ALEC, they have introduced scores of reactionary anti-union bills in dozens of states.

Other Koch-funded efforts include the Republican national effort to unduly police the voting process to discourage young people, minorities and seniors from casting ballots.

The Koch brothers make \$13 million a day from their investments, but they want to eliminate minimum wage laws and oppose any increases.

The Koch brothers want to destroy the most popular government program of all, Social Security, by funding right-wing think tanks that spread misinformation about Social Security's long-term financial health, claiming it will not survive. They want to raise the retirement age for Social Security to 70, which would especially penalize

blue-collar workers who do manual labor, as their bodies wear out more quickly than white-collar workers.

The Koch brother' massive investments and holdings are literally killing the planet, because their primary business is transporting gas and oil. That includes the Canadian oil tar sands, which is the dirtiest source of fossil fuel on earth. If these sands are developed for the U.S. or Chinese markets, it would be the biggest carbon bomb in decades, hastening the progress of global climate change.

Worst of all they spent million to get Citizen United passed which allowed them to hide their money and identities to deceive the public from knowing who is behind so much discord.

We need to expose oligarchs like Charles Koch and his greedy corporate colleague by passing LD 1317 to retain our form of government and to keep their money out of our state.

Thank you for allowing me to express my view and support for this very important bill. Fo the sake of our democracy I urge you to vote yes.

Respectfully,

Patrick Eisenhart, M.S., Commander, USCG (re)

Charles Koch and his late brother David have been playing a long haul game to take over state and the federal government since 1980 to use their billions in wealth and power from a massive network of oil and gas pipelines, and investments in other polluting industries like paper and plastics.

as already large corporate dollars, especially from the Koch Network have attempted to wrest control of Maine state government as it has in the U.S. Senate, a large body making up the Freedom Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, governors and state legislators with chapters of its American Legistlative Executive Councils (ALEC) to which some members of the Maine legislature, past and present, belong.

While ALEC refuses to make any complete list of these corporate members available to the public, some known members include: ExxonMobil, the American Bail Coalition, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), AT&T, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, PhRMA, TimeWarner Cable, Comcast, Verizon, Wal-Mart, the National Rifle Association, Koch Industries, the Heritage Foundation (co-founded by ALEC founder Paul Weyrich), the Cato Institute (an offshoot of the Charles Koch Foundation), GlaxoSmithKline, Phillip Morris International, the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), and a slew of lobby firms representing scores of other corporate/special interests—to name a few.

ALEC is comprised of nine “task forces:” 1.) Public Safety and Elections, 2.) Civil Justice, 3.) Education, 4.) Energy, Environment and Agriculture, 5.) Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development, 6.) Telecommunications and Information Technology, 7.) Health and Human Services, 8.) Tax and Fiscal Policy, and 9.) International Relations.

Each task force is comprised of both public and private sector members—the public sector members being elected lawmakers, the private sector members being corporate/'think tank' representatives.

These task forces serve as the core of ALEC's operations, generating “model legislation,” which is then passed on to member lawmakers for introduction in their home assemblies.

According to ALEC promotional material, each year member lawmakers introduce an average of 1,000 pieces of legislation.

According to Business Insider, the Koch brothers and/or their non-profits ramped up their political efforts during the 2018 midterms, vowing to spend up to \$400 million to support conservative candidates

During the 2016 presidential election, the Koch network spent around \$750 million,

putting it almost on par with the amount spent by the Republican Party.

During 2020 election the Koch brothers spent over 800 million to Senate and House members and Republicans running for office. Among those was a \$10000 donation to Dale Crafts, Republican candidate for Maine's 2nd Congressional District seat..

ALEC mentioned above, as an organization, has received significant funding from the Charles Koch Foundation and one of its member (and therefore “donor”) organizations is the Cato Institute. According to Cato incorporation documents, the organization was initially incorporated as an offshoot of the Charles Koch Foundation in 1974.

Today, the Cato Institute funds the Maine Heritage Institute which advocates of Republican and Koch libertarian candidates and agendas.

A prominent ALEC member think tank, the Reason Foundation (a “libertarian” public policy institute devoted to promoting privatization of governmental functions) is funded in part by the Charles Koch Foundation.

The largest Koch funded non-profit is the Americans for Prosperity Foundation (AFPF, a prominent contributor to the ALEC/Koch public policy network— initially incorporated as Citizens for a Sound Economy Educational Foundation), is funded largely by the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch Industries (whose capital is derived primarily from chemical manufacturing and energy production, as well as from diversified holdings in a number of other corporations).

The Cato Institute, which Charles Koch helped create in 1974, is consistently ranked as among the top 25 U.S. think tanks overall in terms of influence on public policy in the United States.

who have accepted large sums of money from the network or its many clandestine non-profit lobby organizations such as the Americans for Prosperity, the so-called Heritage Foundation, and the Cato Institute.

The Koch brothers indicated that they intended to raise almost \$880 million in support of candidates in the 2016 elections,[17] and have given more than \$100 million[18] to conservative and libertarian policy and advocacy groups in the United States,[19] including the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute, and more recently Americans for Prosperity.